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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report has been prepared in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/27, in which the Council, acknowledging the progress made by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research through the strategic reforms initiated in 2007, noted as areas of progress the establishment of results-based management, the establishment of quality standards and certification, and the expanded use of technology-enhanced learning tools. In the same resolution, the Council took note of the recommendation of the Secretary-General concerning the efforts that the Institute could make in laying the groundwork for more efficient training and research service provision within the United Nations system.

Since January 2010, the Institute has embarked on a set of new strategic priorities that aim to bring it closer to its goal of becoming a centre of excellence in the fields of training, capacity development and research on knowledge systems. The Institute has recorded a 33 per cent increase in beneficiaries and a 5.4 per cent increase in the number of events held in 2010 compared to 2009. The use of technology-enhanced tools has increased, and important achievements have been made in enhancing the diversity and quality of the Institute's products and services, and in results-based management. The Institute has also begun to implement a new business model that has self-generated income at its core.

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The Institute continues to register growth in financial performance, with the budget increasing by 54 per cent, from $27.3 million in the 2006-2007 biennium to $42.1 million in the 2010-2011 biennium. From 2008 to 2010, revenue grew by 18 per cent, from $17.7 million to $20.9 million. Non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund to support institutional reforms, however, remain at low and unpredictable levels, with a 20 per cent decrease in 2010 compared to 2008. Contributions to the Fellowship Fund are also low, despite the General Assembly welcoming the Fund's establishment and appealing to Member States and other entities to provide financial support.

The Secretary-General recommends that Member States provide their full support to the Institute in implementing its strategic reforms, including financial contributions to the General Fund and Fellowship Fund, and the means to address the persistent office space challenges that are likely to stem growth and the achievement of strategic goals.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2009/27, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of the resolution at its substantive session of 2011. The report is the second to be prepared and submitted to the Council in compliance with General Assembly resolution 62/210, by which the Assembly established a streamlined reporting arrangement for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

2. Strengthening the capacities of beneficiaries through targeted training and research on knowledge systems is the main mission of UNITAR. The positive results achieved in output performance in the 2008-2009 biennium continued into the first half of the present biennium. In 2010, overall beneficiary outreach rose to 23,655 individuals, representing a 33 per cent increase over 2009, with more than 50 per cent of beneficiaries participating in events shared with partners. UNITAR organized 368 events in 2010, which represented a 5.7 per cent increase over 2009. Nearly 70 per cent of the beneficiaries of training and training-related events came from African, Asian, Latin American and Caribbean countries, with an overall male-female gender ratio of 60:40.

3. These outputs were produced by a dynamic corps of engaged and motivated professionals representing one of the most gender-balanced organizations in the United Nations system. Since the release of the Secretary-General's report on the improvement of the status of women in the United Nations system (A/63/364), which showed the Institute to be one of the two United Nations bodies in which the percentage of women staff was 50 per cent or above, UNITAR has continued to closely monitor its staff composition, the male-female ratio of which is at present 53:47. UNITAR is also committed to monitoring geographical representation with a view to promoting staff diversity. Moreover, with a relatively young workforce, the Institute continues to grow and to adapt its size to evolving programming and operational needs. The increase in the number of trainees, interns and collaborators, from 36 in 2008 to 95 in 2010, is reflective of the growing interest of young professionals in the Institute's work.

4. The Institute is committed to delivering its products and services as cost effectively as possible, with the objective of achieving results with minimal impact on the environment. In applying its carbon neutral policy, UNITAR monitors greenhouse gas emissions based on energy consumption at headquarters and all staff and personnel travel, with 295 tons of carbon emissions reported and compensated for in 2008. As of 2009, UNITAR included in the calculation of its greenhouse gas inventory the emissions originating from energy consumption at all outposted offices and the travel of participants administered through the United Nations travel unit. In 2009, 546 tons of carbon were reported and compensated for. As of 2010, the Institute will also offset emissions originating from the travel of all participants. Emphasis will be placed on expanding technology-enhanced learning, moving programming operations closer to beneficiary bases through the regional offices and other networks and reducing printing by maintaining electronic filing. With these measures, UNITAR will figure as one of the United Nations entities taking the lead in responding to climate change imperatives.

5. In resolution 2009/27, the Economic and Social Council noted as areas for progress by UNITAR the establishment of results-based management across the work of the Institute, the establishment of quality standards and certification and the expanded use of technology-enhanced learning tools. In the same resolution, the Council took note of the recommendation of the Secretary-General concerning the efforts the Institute could make in laying the groundwork for more efficient training and research service provision within the United Nations system (E/2008/58, para. 67).

6. Building on reform achievements made between 2007 and 2009, the Institute began to implement a new set of strategic priorities in January 2010, namely: identifying and responding more effectively to beneficiary needs; enhancing the quality and diversity of training products and services; strengthening efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the delivery of results; and increasing autonomy. Section II of the present report reviews each of these four strategic priorities, emphasizing the progress made in the areas identified by the Council in resolution 2009/27.

7. Section III of the report presents a number of programmatic initiatives which lay the groundwork for the more efficient provision of training and research services within the United Nations system, including in areas related to climate change, peacekeeping and international migration and development. The section also contains information on the Institute's role in promoting system-wide coordination and its work related to preparations for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, to be held in 2012.

8. Section IV addresses the financial situation of the Institute, which is marked by continued growth in income and expenditures, despite important funding commitments not having materialized in 2010 and the prolonged weakness in, and unpredictable voluntary contributions to, the General Fund.

9. Section V highlights the challenges that UNITAR continues to face, including the scarcity of resources and the constraints that this places on institutional reform, and the insufficient and inadequate space available at its headquarters in Geneva and its Office in New York.

10. In section VI, it is recommended that Member States provide their full support, including the necessary means to address the alarmingly low level of the General Fund, the lack of financial resources for the newly established Fellowship Fund and the office space constraints, which risk stemming the achievement of strategic goals.

II. Pursuing a new strategic direction

11. Based on significant accomplishments since the reform measures were initiated in 2007, UNITAR in 2009 engaged in a widespread consultative process to devise a course of action that would advance reform efforts to lead it closer to its goal of being a recognized centre of excellence in the fields of training, capacity development and research on knowledge systems. This process resulted in the development of the Institute's second strategic plan, an outward-looking, beneficiary-focused plan covering the period 2010-2012. The plan is ambitious yet realistic, is built on four interrelated strategic pillars and is consistent with broader United Nations reform goals to enhance the delivery of mandates. Endorsed by the

Institute's Board of Trustees at its forty-ninth session in November 2009, the plan is approaching its midterm with a number of noteworthy results achieved.

A. Identifying and responding more effectively to beneficiary needs

1. Responses to thematic priorities

12. In designing and carrying out its activities for 2010 and 2011, the Institute has paid particular attention to emerging thematic priorities. In connection with ongoing deliberations on system-wide coherence, for example, UNITAR is delivering a series of courses on United Nations reform, covering topics related to institutional adaptation, management reform, system-wide coherence and integrated approaches to conflict and post-conflict situations. Over 70 New York-based diplomats took part in the courses held in 2010, and an additional series is planned for October 2011. Similarly, in response to General Assembly resolution 64/289 on system-wide coherence, in which UNITAR was requested to prepare and carry out orientation and training courses on the functioning of United Nations operational activities for development, the Institute is holding a seminar in May 2011 on the functioning and governance of United Nations development architecture, including the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies, funding mechanisms and inter-agency coordination.

13. In the area of climate change, UNITAR has been increasing its response to broad-based capacity needs, including training support targeting presiding officers, as was provided in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Cancún, Mexico, immediately prior to the sixteenth session of the Conference of the Parties in 2010. Similar efforts have been undertaken with the Government of South Africa with a view to contributing to national preparations for the presidency of the seventeenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in Durban, South Africa, in November-December 2011.

14. Much emphasis continues to be paid to increasing urbanization trends and balancing environmental management with economic development. In this vein, UNITAR has noted an increasing demand for training and capacity development in relation to enhancing basic services, such as water and sanitation, waste management and transport, through its nine Centres internationaux de formation des acteurs locaux (International Training Centres for Local Actors) (CIFAL). Under consideration by the Institute in 2011 is the expansion of the CIFAL training network in the Arab and African regions in order to address the increased demand for capacity-building for local development programmes through training, at the municipal level, in the delivery of basic social services.

15. As a cross-cutting theme, gender mainstreaming and, more broadly, gender-related programming have figured prominently in the Institute's training curriculum for the biennium 2010-2011, particularly in the fields of peace, security and diplomacy. Activities have ranged from online peacekeeping training courses on protection from sexual harassment, violence and abuse, and online and face-to-face courses targeting women in diplomacy, to the Afghan Gender Equality Fellowship Programme. These activities are discussed in more detail in section III.

2. Growth in knowledge-sharing outreach

16. In addition to training and training-related events aimed at developing knowledge, skills and awareness, UNITAR has continued its high-level engagement with the most senior officials of the United Nations responsible for the prevention and resolution of conflict through planning and facilitating the seminar for special and personal representatives and envoys of the Secretary-General. First held in 2001 and now organized in association with the United Nations System Staff College, the seminar gathers together the most senior Headquarters staff and the heads of peace missions and envoys to exchange knowledge and experience with the purpose of enhancing United Nations practice. Heads of United Nations agencies, the United Nations High Commissioners and senior staff of the African Union, among others, participate. Since 2007, UNITAR has facilitated the convening of the heads of mission conferences of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, in conjunction with the aforementioned seminar. Based on interviews with special and personal representatives and envoys, and with the goal of enhancing mediation practice, UNITAR, in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs, published in 2010 a manual for United Nations mediators. The manual, which contains advice from United Nations representatives and envoys, is made available to special and personal representatives and envoys, to departmental staff and to officials and representatives participating in the Institute's training programmes on peacemaking and conflict prevention.

17. The Institute continued to target public audiences, with outreach to some 4,000 individuals through the high-level Geneva lecture series organized jointly with the United Nations Office at Geneva and other special events, including a high-level panel on the theme "Chinese development in the wake of reform and opening up", held at the conclusion of the forty-ninth session of the Board of Trustees in Beijing, in partnership with the Counsellor's Office of the State Council of the People's Republic of China. The Institute also displayed various aspects of its programming at World Expo 2010 in Shanghai, China, with some 177,000 individuals visiting the United Nations pavilion during UNITAR week. In cooperation with a range of public and private partners, 15 events were held throughout the week, with themes including city-to-city collaboration for sustainable development (sponsored by nine CIFAL centres), climate change adaptation in China, corporate social responsibility, the Millennium Development Goals and Global Compact principles, the Institute's capacity development initiative in Afghanistan, UNITAR-Google day, and economic cooperation between China and Africa.

3. Expanded presence in the global South

18. With the majority of the Institute's beneficiaries coming from developing countries, establishing a physical presence in Africa, Asia and South America and developing regional strategies are central elements in enabling the Institute to identify and respond more effectively to the needs of beneficiaries. The opening of the UNITAR Office in Brasilia in October 2010 marked the first step in the successful implementation of the Institute's strategic vision to establish outposted offices in underrepresented regions. Based on a tripartite agreement among the National School for Public Administration, the Brazilian Cooperation Agency and UNITAR, the Brasilia Office will strengthen the Institute's representation both in Brazil and with other United Nations agencies based in Brazil; develop knowledge

and skills; and prepare for the expansion of some operations to the wider South American region and to African Portuguese-speaking countries through training activities and sharing of methodologies and content within the framework of international cooperation and enhanced South-South cooperation. By the end of 2011, in addition to the work being undertaken for the delivery of content through e-learning, eight face-to-face training courses targeting some 800 beneficiaries will have been delivered. By the end of 2011, the Brasilia Office will also have designed its regional strategy for South America.

19. Progress has also been made towards the opening of representational offices in Africa and Asia, with negotiations advancing quickly with the President's Office and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria in relation to a representational office in Abuja, and with authorities in China regarding the opening of a representational office in Tianjin, Beijing or another city. Negotiations are also continuing with South Africa on the possible opening of an office in Pretoria.

4. Increased use of technology-enhanced learning

20. Along with the establishment of regional offices, the Institute has made progress in terms of expanding the application of diverse training methodologies, including the development and use of technology-enhanced training tools, since it first introduced online training in 2003. To respond to the increasing online learning needs, UNITAR launched a new virtual learning environment in January 2010. Powered by Moodle, a web-based course management system, the virtual learning environment offers multiple instructional settings and supports instructional design requirements that favour non-linear approaches, explorative and collaborative learning, experience-sharing and networking.

21. Technology-enhanced learning continues to grow impressively and now represents one quarter of the Institute's activities. Based on 2009 figures, UNITAR registered in 2010 a 25 per cent increase in the number of e-learning courses, and a 50 per cent increase in the number of programmes offering e-learning, including courses in new thematic areas as diverse as knowledge systems and peacekeeping. A total of 38 new courses were developed and delivered in 2010, and an additional 30 are under development and expected to be delivered in 2011. As a result of these efforts, UNITAR aims to achieve a further 25 per cent increase in the number of e-learning courses by the end of 2011, with new programmes and offices, including its New York and Hiroshima offices and the newly established Brasilia Office, offering e-learning as an enhanced opportunity for professional development. It is the intention of the Institute that, by the end of the current strategic planning cycle in 2012, all programming divisions offer e-learning opportunities; this is expected to contribute to increasing the Institute's global outreach, thereby expanding its capacity to respond to training and learning needs.

22. In addition to vigorously pursuing growth in online course offerings, the Institute is working to increase the number of blended learning opportunities, which combine face-to-face instruction with technology-enhanced learning. Based on the proven successes of ongoing projects, such as the Continued IT Education (CITE) programme which aims to develop the skills of New York-based diplomats in the application of information technology through certified computer-based training and in-person assisted laboratories, UNITAR intends to further expand its virtual learning environment to encompass online assessments to establish baseline levels

of knowledge, other pre-training activities, and continuous learning opportunities as a follow-up to both face-to-face and e-learning events.

23. Partnerships with more than 30 entities, including a range of organizations of the United Nations system (e.g., Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), non-governmental organizations (e.g., International Institute for Trade and Development, South Centre), academia (e.g., École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne, Nigerian Institute for Advanced Legal Studies, Open University, University of Gothenburg, World Trade Institute) and the private sector (e.g., Lalive, Veolia Environnement) have contributed to this impressive growth in e-learning and, more broadly, in technology-enhanced learning.

B. Enhancing the quality and diversity of training products and services

24. The Institute has been working to put in place quality assurance mechanisms to enhance the quality of its training products and services. In April 2010, UNITAR established the Quality Assurance Committee to develop internal guidelines for course design reflective of recognized international standards. The long-term objective is to implement a structured review process, through the Quality Assurance Committee, which would examine the courses and other events developed by the Institute. These procedures will take into consideration the diversity of the Institute's work and, more broadly, the standards required for it to become a recognized leader in learning services and capacity development.

25. In the field of e-learning, UNITAR, through its Knowledge Systems Innovation Unit, has been actively taking part since 2009 in a multi-agency participatory process to develop a set of quality improvement criteria for technology-enhanced learning in international capacity-building, known as Open ECBCheck. The recently developed set of criteria raises standards by enabling training and capacity development service providers to measure the success of e-learning and engage in continuous learning and quality improvement. In November 2010, UNITAR was awarded ECBCheck certification for its water and urban sanitation e-learning course. The Institute aims to have a further 10 e-learning courses aligned with ECBCheck criteria by the end of 2011.

26. To achieve the Institute's objectives to strengthen quality, in-house training on instructional design is being organized in mid-2011 to develop staff knowledge of instructional design concepts among managers, specialists and other programming personnel, with opportunities to practice the application of concepts using open-source authoring tools and to integrate learning objects into the virtual learning environment.

27. With a view to obtaining credit validation for its learning-related events, UNITAR has initiated a process to assess courses in the context of the European Credit Transfer System and is presently analysing the number of learning hours in courses related to diplomacy, environmental law, local development and public finance and trade.

28. In addition to efforts to diversify delivery methods, a noteworthy trend is the increased emphasis that UNITAR is placing on multiplier effects, such as training of trainers and training of coaches, as pursued over the past several years in the areas of conflict resolution (Nigeria), post-conflict reconstruction (Afghanistan) and diplomacy (South Africa). Based on tangible results, UNITAR has expanded multiplier approaches in existing areas, including training of diplomatic trainers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe, and has extended multiplier approaches to the fields of peacekeeping, chemicals management, climate change and satellite imagery training.

C. Strengthening efficiency, effectiveness and accountability in the delivery of results

29. The Institute is committed to strengthening its accountability framework, enhancing resource efficiencies and improving the relevance and effectiveness of its programmes. To this end, UNITAR, in September 2009, established the Monitoring and Evaluation Section to undertake the substantive, analytical and advisory work required to support the effective delivery by the Institute of its overarching managing-for-results strategy. In addition to developing tools, providing guidance and performing independent monitoring and evaluation functions, the Section monitors a set of key performance indicators which are aligned to the four priority areas of the current strategic plan. Among the key performance measures used are: beneficiary outreach, including geographic and gender ratios; number and profile of events, including delivery methods and partnership modalities; client satisfaction, including overall ratings on relevance and intention to use; assessment of learning; and financial performance.

1. Centralized event management database

30. As information collection and management play a central role in performance frameworks, UNITAR has built and configured an event management system. Designed as a content and beneficiary relationship interface, the system provides an integrated solution for recording and managing the entire spectrum of events and beneficiaries. The system is designed to enable potential beneficiaries to view and search for event information, apply and/or register and, where applicable, pay online. The system also enables UNITAR staff to manage and report on event and beneficiary information. Once the configuration of the system is finalized, the Institute will be able to greatly streamline transactions and workflows, provide near real-time beneficiary and event information to its stakeholders, and further enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and accuracy of its reporting.

31. The Institute now uses more precise reporting methods and differentiates among three categories of beneficiaries: those under the full responsibility of UNITAR; those under shared responsibility (i.e., with partners); and those under the responsibility of another entity but with financial and/or substantive contributions provided by UNITAR. The Institute also differentiates between beneficiaries of training and training-related events, and those participating in other types of events, such as conferences, public lectures and high-level meetings.

2. Strengthened results-based management capacities

32. In January 2010, the Institute began the implementation of an integrated results-based management framework which links the strategic plan and the biennial results-based programme budget to annual programme and individual workplans, and the annual staff performance evaluation to staff development plans. The format of annual workplans to monitor progress in the achievement of results has been harmonized, and a consolidated annual workplan of the Institute is maintained on an internal computer network, enabling managers and other staff to review and update expected outcomes, outputs and indicators, as well as major activities when required. In addition to enhanced programme planning practices, the Institute is increasing its utilization of logical frameworks (log frames) at the project level and using log frames or other results matrices in project planning and implementation.

33. The Institute has also introduced programme performance reporting to review the extent to which expected accomplishments, as reported in the programme budget, have been achieved. The exercise, which was conducted initially by the Institute's training programmes in the 2008-2009 biennium, will be extended to all departments and divisions at the end of the present biennium. As from the 2012-2013 biennium, programme performance reporting will be undertaken annually, with a full report issued at the end of each biennium and an interim report prepared at midterm.

3. Enhanced monitoring and evaluation

34. Along with enhancing its monitoring of results, UNITAR has strengthened evaluation tools and approaches. While the practice of gathering participation reaction in the form of surveys or questionnaires has been undertaken for some time, the Institute was not able to present aggregated data until 2010, given the wide variation in questions and numerical scaling. To respond to this need, a set of standardized questions and scales has been prepared and is now being administered systematically to gather information along a number of key parameters for corporate-wide reporting. For example, based on a sample of 145 events (45 per cent of those held in 2010), an average of 90 per cent of the beneficiaries responding agreed or strongly agreed that the event information presented was new to them, that the content was relevant to their jobs and that they would be likely to use the information acquired.

35. Beyond obtaining beneficiary reaction, UNITAR is working to increase its capacities to assess learning outcomes, using level 2 of the Kirkpatrick evaluation model. All e-learning courses and an increasing number of face-to-face learning-related events are employing tools to measure learning, such as objective testing, including criterion-referenced tests, pre- and post-tests, or post-tests only; performance assessment; simulation and role playing; and self-assessment. Based on a sample of six of the UNITAR divisions which deliver training, 65 per cent of learning events underwent some form of Kirkpatrick level-2 evaluation. By the end of 2011, the Institute aims to increase this to 80 per cent and employ more robust methods for evaluating learning outcomes. With the implementation of a new monitoring and evaluation policy framework scheduled to take effect later in 2011, outcome and higher-level results will be assessed more routinely, with a view to strengthening accountability and promoting organizational learning and quality improvement.

D. Increasing autonomy

36. A key pillar of the Institute's strategic direction is the implementation of a new business model designed to increase financial autonomy through the mobilization of self-generated income. In 2010, UNITAR mobilized $1.2 million, or 6.7 per cent of total, in the form of self-generated income, based for the most part on 52 fee-based training courses, the majority of which were delivered online. As a number of programmes are well into the process of developing training content which is expected to be delivered on a cost-recovery basis, UNITAR aims to increase self-generated income to 8 per cent in 2011 and, at the time of reporting, has scheduled 139 fee-based courses (a 167 per cent increase over those provided in 2010). The launching of the online payment system is expected to greatly facilitate this form of income generation, and the related payments and financial transactions.

37. In addition to expanding its fee-based training services, the Institute is working to adjust current fees as the courses and other events are aligned with quality assurance and certification schemes.

38. While vigorously pursuing self-generated income to increase financial autonomy, fee-based training should not become an obstacle to learning, particularly for the groups of beneficiaries whose capacity needs are greatest. To ensure that its services remain universally accessible, the Institute established the Fellowship Fund, which enables UNITAR to issue fee reductions or waivers for eligible beneficiaries from the least developed and other developing countries. The Fellowship Fund is distinct from the General Fund, with contributions going exclusively to supporting the participation of eligible beneficiaries in learning-related events. The Fund is also flexible, enabling donors to earmark contributions for specific purposes, such as programming areas, geographical regions or linguistic groups.

39. The General Assembly, in resolution 64/260, welcomed this initiative and appealed to Member States and other entities to provide financial support. The Institute aims to mobilize $1 million in financial support for the Fund in 2011. To ensure accurate reporting to donors, an elaborate monitoring system has been developed, providing details on the utilization of funds, including the number of fee reductions and waivers, the programme areas, and the gender and nationalities of recipients.

40. As a consequence of efforts to find a sustainable solution to the underfunded yet highly valued core diplomatic training, emphasis has been placed on aligning it with the new business model. In stark contrast to previous years, when this training was offered free of charge, 64 per cent of the core diplomatic training events scheduled for 2011 are now administered on a fee-paying basis. The Institute has also increased efforts to forge partnerships with organizations in the form of in kind or financial support in order to continue offering certain core diplomatic training activities free of charge.

41. In line with General Assembly resolution 64/260 and in order to ensure that core diplomatic training remains a service for all Member States, the Institute has created an earmarked window within the Fellowship Fund to which the Governments of Austria, Barbados and Malaysia have contributed and the Government of Turkey has pledged support. Efforts continue to be made to mobilize support from other Member States, including Angola, the Dominican Republic,

Qatar, South Africa and Sweden. Based on contributions, 62 individuals have benefited to date from fee waivers or reductions.

III. Towards more efficient training and research service provision within the United Nations system

42. In resolution 2009/27, the Economic and Social Council took note of the recommendation of the Secretary-General concerning the efforts the Institute could make in laying the groundwork for more efficient training and research service provision within the United Nations system (see E/2009/57, para. 67). Discussed below is the role that the Institute is playing in regard to the "Delivering as One" approach, including the work it is pursuing both in conjunction with the United Nations System Staff College, taking advantage of the synergies resulting from the current joint leadership of the two institutions, and with other United Nations agencies and organizations.

A. Efficiency gains through increased e-learning and training of trainers

43. With one quarter of the beneficiaries of its training and training-related events learning online, UNITAR is realizing important gains in resource efficiency: increased flexibility and a broadened outreach, a reduced carbon footprint and the possibility of reusing course design and content for multiple audiences. As mentioned in paragraph 23, partnerships have played an important role in this development, with 20 per cent of e-courses in 2010 developed and/or delivered with other entities (although less than 5 per cent were developed and/or delivered with other United Nations entities). Other efficiency gains are being met by engaging in the multiplier effects of capacity development, such as training of trainers, and by pursuing synergistic and Delivering as One approaches to programming, discussed in more detail below.

B. Delivering as One: achievements through inter-agency collaboration

1. Climate change

44. The Institute was one of four United Nations entities working to develop and promote the One United Nations training service platform for climate change (see E/2009/57, para. 28). Since its launch in 2009, the platform, referred to as CC:Learn, has mobilized 23 United Nations agencies, with UNITAR, UNDP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) investing in kind and seed financial resources for the initial activities, carried out in 2010. In addition to serving on the platform's steering and project management committees, UNITAR has played a key role in the coordination efforts and currently serves as the platform's secretariat. Together with UNDP and on behalf of agencies participating in the platform, UNITAR has secured funding from the Government of Switzerland for a two-year pilot phase focusing on the further development of CC:Learn knowledge management and networking services, the development of a comprehensive and peer-reviewed package of climate change learning materials, and the

implementation of country-driven pilot projects in four countries. The country projects will contribute to the implementation of article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the individual level capacity pillar of the capacity development framework. Moreover, under the guidance of the United Nations Development Group and UNDP, the Institute (through CC:Learn) and the United Nations System Staff College are collaborating closely in supporting regional train-the-trainer workshops in 2011 to roll out the Development Group's guidance on environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster risk reduction.

2. Peacekeeping

45. The Institute has successfully restructured its peacekeeping training programme with the overall objective of contributing to the effectiveness of peace operations by improving the knowledge and skills of civilian, military and police personnel interested in being deployed to field missions. A guiding principle of the programme is that of creating synergy and avoiding overlap and duplication by engaging partners and identifying innovative and cross-cutting themes, such as strengthening the endogenous training capacities of African peacekeeping training centres through the training of trainers.

46. To operationalize the concept of synergy, UNITAR has promoted its peacekeeping training as an inter-agency knowledge-sharing platform through its leadership in e-learning, as follows:

(a) Based on the United Nations policy approach referred to as the integrated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration standards, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration course is being converted into e-learning in order to reach the common goal of developing and sharing training material and methods. The online course will be validated during the seventh annual general meeting of the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Training Group, which the Institute is hosting in June 2011;

(b) Following the successful completion (i.e., design and hosting) of the online security sector reform course, in partnership with the International Security Sector Advisory Team, an online course on security sector reform will be developed in 2011, in collaboration with the inter-agency task force on security sector reform;

(c) In partnership with UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNHCR, UNITAR is strengthening capacities in regard to gender-based violence by providing specific training for programme team members and capacity promoters to deliver powerful presentations to senior staff, and by developing a community of practice under the auspices of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

47. The Institute is also pursuing cooperation with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. As stated in the Secretary-General's report on the progress of training in peacekeeping (A/65/644 and Corr.1, para. 26), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support are engaged in discussions with UNITAR and the United Nations System Staff College on an agreement to leverage the comparative advantages of the Institute and the Staff College in the areas of instructional design and delivery methodologies to ensure quality, accessibility and cost-effectiveness in

delivering the peacemaking curriculum. Specific collaboration would include the joint delivery, with the Integrated Training Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, of the Senior Mission Leaders' Course; the development and implementation, together with other key United Nations agencies, of a training-of-trainers programme for enhancing the capacity of African peacekeeping; the building of synergies between the support teams of Member States and the Integrated Training Service with a view to enhancing predeployment training for military and police personnel; and the development and implementation of specialized training courses in the context of the peacekeeping training programme.

3. Migration

48. Since 2006, when the General Assembly held the first High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development, UNITAR, through its series of seminars on migration and development convened at United Nations Headquarters together with its partners (International Organization for Migration, UNFPA and MacArthur Foundation), has become an established arena through which government and civil society representatives, United Nations staff and other migration stakeholders heighten their awareness and understanding of international migration from the legal, political and institutional perspectives. In 2008, the seminars were formally recognized as the central meeting place at United Nations Headquarters for migration stakeholders. Moreover, and in this context, UNITAR works with the presidencies of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (in 2011, the presidency rests with Switzerland), to deliver joint training activities which inform the diplomatic community and other stakeholders of the Global Forum and work towards pursuing its objectives. The series will be concentrated henceforth on the preparations for the second high-level dialogue, to be held in 2013.

49. In addition to this well-established platform for face-to-face learning, UNITAR is working with the inter-agency Global Migration Group to develop learning packages on its behalf. At the request of the Group, UNITAR and the International Organization for Migration are at present conducting a survey of the training activities performed in the 2010-2011 biennium by all members of the Global Migration Group for government officials around the world. This exercise will serve as a first step towards developing Global Migration Group learning packages for migration stakeholders. These learning packages and tools will be delivered through a migration capacity development portal, which will work to satisfy broader trends within the international community to deliver as one on knowledge tools and training. It will also capitalize on the global trend to share the world's knowledge through open-source educational outlets.

4. Advancing development goals

50. In partnership with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, UNITAR is contributing to the strengthening of African ownership and leadership through continental capacity development initiatives. Specifically, the Institute's contribution aims to (a) strengthen the capacities of African countries in increasing their participation in global trade and in linking trade policies to poverty reduction; (b) strengthen capacities for effective participation in multilateral financial negotiations and build expertise in negotiation on financing for development; (c) strengthen the participation of African countries in environmental and carbon finance negotiations; and (d) increase the effectiveness of regional institutions for

crisis prevention. The initiative will mobilize and assemble a large number of experts, institutions and beneficiaries through face-to-face knowledge and skills development workshops, e-learning courses and other online participatory activities, as well as high-level conferences.

51. In partnership with the Afghan Civil Service Institute and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Institute is working to achieve a comprehensive and inclusive approach to gender-policy development and implementation, with empowered Afghan female public officials serving as agents of change and transformation by performing leadership and mentoring roles in their respective organizations and thereby contributing to the post-conflict reconstruction of Afghanistan. Other expected outcomes include a strengthened and highly committed group of programme beneficiaries who can serve as a resource for planning and implementing capacity-building on a sustained basis.

5. Satellite imagery and analysis

52. Since 2009, UNITAR has further increased the technical capability and technological soundness of the satellite mapping and analysis services of its programme on operational satellite applications (UNOSAT), thereby benefiting the entire United Nations system working to counter the consequences of natural disasters and to plan for sustainable development. The dense network of users and other partners has expanded to include other United Nations agencies, such as UNHCR and UNICEF, in addition to other entities, such as the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre and Google.org. In response to the Haiti earthquake, a strategic partnership among UNOSAT, the European Commission Joint Research Centre and the World Bank and its Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) was mobilized to carry out the first integrated damage assessment to rely on geographic information and satellite imagery.

53. The UNOSAT approach to providing innovation in the use of geographic information is based on technical soundness, combined with a relentless effort to respond to user needs with concrete solutions that have high impact at low cost. Thanks to a decisive increase in efficiency and in the level of inter-agency cooperation, UNOSAT was able to maintain its coverage of the humanitarian relief efforts entirely coordinated by the United Nations by supporting each operation with specific satellite-derived mapping and analysis. In 2009 alone, UNOSAT delivered over 500 maps and analytical reports and trained over 200 national experts from Asia, Africa and Central America. In recognizing the role played by UNOSAT in the context of United Nations efforts to respond to natural disasters, the International Charter Space and Major Disasters designated UNOSAT a Charter User Intermediary with the role of triggering the Charter mechanism created by leading space agencies throughout the world to provide swiftly satellite data to the international community in the wake of major disasters.

6. Conference on Sustainable Development, 2012

54. The Institute is actively engaged in the preparations for the Conference on Sustainable Development to be held in 2012, which will mark the twentieth anniversary of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the tenth anniversary of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. A number of activities are currently under preparation, including the

organization of a green growth knowledge fair as a side event that will bring together companies involved in implementing innovative solutions for sustainable development; a high-level meeting devoted to preparing a new vision of sustainability; a series of green growth workshops at the training centres of local authorities or actors associated with UNITAR; a green economy e-learning course, in partnership with UNEP; a meeting of experts on human resource and skills development to foster environmental sustainability; and the Second International Conference of Innovative Cities, organized in partnership with the Federation of Industries of the State of Paraná, Brazil.

IV. Financial situation of the Institute

55. The Institute remains on a solid financial footing. At its fiftieth session in January 2011, the Board of Trustees revised the budget for the 2010-2011 biennium. The revised budget of $42.1 million reflects a projected growth rate of 20 per cent compared to actual expenditures for the 2008-2009 biennium. Moreover, with $20.9 million mobilized in 2010, the Institute has increased its revenue by 18 per cent above the $17.7 million raised in 2008. This positive trend is reflective of the 25 per cent growth in the $34.2 million mobilized in the 2008-2009 biennium compared to the $27.3 million raised during the 2006-2007 biennium. The Institute has also increased its reserves and fund balances to $10.1 million in 2010, representing a growth of 11 per cent over 2009.

56. The Institute, however, continues to struggle with weak and unpredictable non-earmarked voluntary contributions to the General Fund. In 2010, the balance of the General Fund was $879,000 (or 4.2 per cent of total income) compared to $1.1 million in 2008, representing an alarming decrease of 20 per cent. Responses to the appeal for contributions to the Fellowship Fund remain regrettably low, with only three Member States having contributed a total of some $80,000 to date.

57. For the second consecutive biennium (2008-2009), the Institute received an unqualified audit opinion of its financial statement from the United Nations Board of Auditors. All previous recommendations have been implemented, and UNITAR is acting swiftly on implementing one recommendation from the 2009 audit.

V. Challenges ahead

A. Advancing the reform agenda with resource scarcity

58. The Institute continues to face challenges in meeting institutional costs, including those associated with important strategic reforms. The weak levels of non-earmarked contributions to the General Fund have delayed the activities and investments which are instrumental in implementing the Institute's new business model and advancing other reforms, such as enhancing the quality of training, further improving evaluation practices and making progress in the area of knowledge management. Staff development training for increased internal capacities in instructional design and evaluation has been delayed, and limited institutional funds have prevented staff and other personnel of the outpost offices from benefiting from training and staff development opportunities.

59. In addition to concerns over the increased weakness of the General Fund, the newly created Fellowship Fund has not received the level of contributions required for UNITAR to reduce or waive course fees for eligible beneficiaries. As a consequence, the Institute's fee-based training services, including core diplomatic training, could very soon become unaffordable for a large majority of the targeted beneficiaries.

B. Office premises

60. Over the past several years, the Institute has more than doubled the number of staff and personnel at its headquarters in Geneva. Despite this exponential growth, office space has remained constant and is placing considerable pressure on the ability of the Institute to continue to grow and reach strategic goals. Beyond presenting important physical space limitations, the issue of office premises is also presenting a financial burden. In 2010 alone, the expenditures for the Institute's office space in Geneva consumed some 40 per cent of the total 2010 contributions to the General Fund. In the absence of a sufficient and predictable basis for funding core institutional costs, and with continued, unacceptably low support for the General Fund, finding a solution to this crisis has become all the more urgent.

VI. Recommendations

61. It is recommended that Member States provide full support, including the necessary means to address the alarmingly low level of the General Fund, the lack of financial resources for the newly established Fellowship Fund and the office space constraints, which risk stemming the achievement of strategic goals.

62. It is also recommended that a group of friends be formed with the purpose of identifying concrete actions, which may include the establishment of an endowment fund by 2015 when the Institute will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary, and other appropriate measures, with the view of providing a sustainable solution.